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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

INFORMATION REPORT

COUNTRY Germany (Soviet Zone)

SUBJECT FDJ Weakens in Its Communist Faith

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1. The Pankow Government has come to realize that the Freie Deutsche Jugend (FDJ) which was so carefully organized and on which so many hopes were based, badly shaken by the risings of 17 and 18 Jun 53, is still in dubious condition. The youth of the German Soviet Zone was, in fact petrified with amazement, when the young people came to realize the real extent and results of the workers' movements. Hence FDJ, formerly regarded as a docile instrument in the government's hands, is now keeping its distance and responding very coldly to appeals for counter-manifestations against the "Fascist western bandits."
2. FDJ members were painfully impressed by the fact that at Leipzig, Jena, Oamburg, and Magdeburg the first thing the rebellious workers did was to attack the SED and the FDJ. FDJ members were thereafter careful to avoid any defensive measures on their own behalf. They are now fearful of a turn in the political situation. This at last gives parents a chance to exert an influence, for the parents, too, hear the first rumblings of a toppling regime. They are urging their children to stay away, and this amounts to mass disobedience to the assembly orders issued by FDJ officials.
3. In a general way, the demonstrations of protest organized in most German cities, after the workers' revolts of 17 and 18 Jun 53, have been boycotted by FDJ members. This attitude is very largely dictated by considerations of prudence.
4. When one thinks how the FDJ has always been the recruiting base for the VoPo, one can understand the alarm of such leaders as Heinz Kessler, Erick Honecker, Robert Menzel, Hermann Axen, Paul Verner, and Edith Bauman. They cannot help realizing the sudden halting of their organization.

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5. From now on, the German (Soviet Zone) authorities are going to take youth in hand again. The FDJ has about 27,000 "agitation groups" and 20,000 "study circles." This group ought to be able to exercise pressure over the 1,300,000 members of FDJ. Very likely young people will be forced back into the organizations. But there will now be a new atmosphere. Never again will it be possible to get such an FDJ turnout as that of Pentecost 1950. The regime is strong enough to see to it that the FDJ shall survive. But FDJ young people have been shaken in their faith. They no longer want to compromise themselves by supporting a political system whose essential fragility has so suddenly appeared.

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